DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 907 JC 810 587

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TITLE Impact of Varsity Athletic Programs on its Participants, 1978-1979. Volume 10, Number 9.
INSTITUTION William Rainey Harper Coll., Palatine, Ill. Office of Planning and Research.
PUB DATE 31 Aug 79
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Athletics; Community Colleges; Females; Males; *Participant Satisfaction; Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Student Attitudes; Student Motivation; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

In June 1979, a study was conducted to determine to what extent William Rainey Harper College's (WRHC's) varsity athletic program attracted new students and to determine the impact of the program on its participants. All 232 students who participated in varsity athletics during 1978-79 were surveyed regarding their principal reason for enrolling at WRHC, their perceptions of the athletic program's greatest strength and weakness, and their feelings about the value of participating in the program. Study findings, based on an 85.8% response rate, include the following: (1) 26.6% of the respondents enrolled at WRHC to participate in the athletic program, while the remainder were more influenced by program, convenience, or cost factors; (2) males, who made up 59% of the responding group, were more apt to enroll at WRHC to participate in athletics than females; (3) 35.8% of the male respondents felt the greatest strength of the program to be their enjoyment of the sport; while 33.8% of the females felt its greatest strength to be closeness with other team members; (4) 75.5% of the respondents felt that the greatest weakness of the program was inadequate facilities and equipment; and (5) with respect to the perceived value of the program, 12% of the respondents cited the ability to participate in varsity athletics at a transfer institution as a major benefit and 29.4% felt their experience had other lasting benefits, including friendship and improved sports ability. The questionnaire is appended. (AYC)

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IMPACT OF VARSITY ATHLETIC PROGRAM ON ITS PARTICIPANTS 1978 - 1979

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WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE

Volume X, No. 9

August 31, 1979

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ABSTRACT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT HARPER'S VARSITY ATHLETIC PROGRAM ATTRACTS NEW STUDENTS AND TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT THE PROGRAM MAKES ON ITS PARTICIPANTS. A MAIL SURVEY WAS SENT TO 232 STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN VARSITY ATHLETICS DURING THE 1978-1979 ACADEMIC YEAR: AFTER A SECOND MAILING AND A TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP, RESPONSES WERE OBTAINED FROM ABOUT 86 PERCENT OF THE TARGET POPULATION.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT ABOUT ONE FOURTH OR 53 OF LAST YEAR'S VARSITY PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED AT HARPER BECAUSE OF THE SPECIFIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OFFERED. THE MAJOR PERCEIVED STRENGTHS OF THE VARSITY PROGRAMS WERE ENJOYMENT OF THAT PARTICULAR SPORT, THE COACH, AND CLOSENESS WITH OTHER TEAM MEMBERS. THE OVERWHELMING WEAKNESS WAS PERCEIVED AS INADEQUATE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT. FINALLY, ABOUT 58 PERCENT OF THE ATHLETES SURVEYED REPORTED RECEIVING A POSITIVE VALUE FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE AND 12 PERCENT WERE RECEIVING OR WOULD AN ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP AT ANOTHER COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent Harper's Varsity Athletic program attracts new students and to determine the impact the program makes on its participants. The study does not focus on the value a varsity athletic program might bring to the general student body in terms of being spectators or school spirit. The Board of Trustees requested that this study be conducted.

Population Surveyed

The target population consisted of all 232 students who participated in varsity athletics at Harper College during the 1978-1979 year. Among this population 41 of these participants were female. After the follow-up process was completed the following response rates were achieved:

	N	PCT
Mail Responses	60	25.9
Phone Responses	139	59.9
Total Responses	199	85.8
Couldn't Reach	33	14.2
Total Population	232	100.0

An 85 percent response rate should insure answers which are representative of the entire survey population.

Methodology

The survey instrument shown in the appendix was developed by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research with input and concurrence by the Associate Dean of the Physical Education, Athletic and Recreational Division and the Vice President of Student Affairs. This instrument was mailed to the target population in June of 1979. After three weeks another mailing was made to those not responding and then after three more weeks telephone calls were made to the remaining non-respondents.

Discussion of Results

Varsity athletic program participants were asked the principle reason they enrolled at Harper. Fifty-three of the respondents or over a fourth said they enrolled because of the athletic program. The others enrolled because of the academic programs, the low cost, or the convenience and then

decided to participate in athletics after making the decision to enroll at Harper. Males were more apt than females to enroll at Harper for the principle reason of participating in varsity athletics.

These participants were also asked to assess what they perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of the athletic programs in which they participated. The greatest strength was enjoyment of that particular sport but other strengths also mentioned frequently were the coach and closeness with other team members. Females perceived the greatest strength as closeness with other team members and mentioned it as a strength much more often than did males. By far the greatest perceived weakness of the athletic program was inadequate facilities and equipment although females mentioned this less often than did males.

Finally, these former Harper athletes were asked to assess the value they personally received from these programs. As a result of Harper's varsity program twelve percent said they now had or would in the future receive an athletic scholarship from another college or university. Another 29 percent reported other specific lasting benefits such as friendship, improved abilities in that sport, a good experience and fond memories, confidence, human relations skills, good physical condition and a number of other benefits. Over all a total of 58 percent reported a positive value received from athletics with females reporting a slightly higher positive response. Some 37 percent had a neutral experience while 5 percent had a bad experience in their varsity program.

Since the overwhelming weakness perceived was inadequate facilities and equipment, it would be very informative to conduct a similar study in two years after the new physical education and athletic facility has been in operation on the Harper Campus. It would be expected that the percent of athletes receiving positive value from athletic programs would increase.

Major Conclusions

About one fourth or 53 of last year's varsity participants enrolled at Harper because of a specific athletic program offered. The major perceived strengths of the varsity programs were enjoyment of that particular sport, the coach, and closeness with other team members. The overwhelming weakness was perceived as inadequate facilities and equipment. Finally, about 58 percent of these athletes reported receiving a positive value from their experience and 12 percent received or would receive an athletic scholarship at another college or university.

DETAILED

RESULTS

SURVEY OF VARSITY ATHLETES

Males N	Males Pct	Females N	Females Pct	Principle Reason for Enrolling at Harper	Total Group N	Total Group Pct
118	71.5	28	82.4	Enrolled Because of Program, Convenience, or Costs	146	73.4
47	28.5	6	17.6	Enrolled to Participate in Athletic Program	53	26.6
165	100.	34	100.		199	100.
				Greatest Perceived Strengths of Athletic Program		
59	35.8	10	29.4	Enjoyment of Particular Sport	69	34.7
45	27.3	5½	16.2	The Coach	50½	25.4
33	20.0	11½	33.8	Closeness with Other Members of Team	44½	22.3
19	11.5	6	17.7	The Competition	25	12.6
7	4.2	1	2.9	The Fact the Person Was Selected to Play Often	8	4.0
1	.6	0	0	The Facilities and Equipment	1	.5
1	.6	0	0	Organization of the Games	1	.5
165	100.	34	100.		199	100.
				Greatest Perceived Weaknesses of Athletic Program		
127	79.4	18	56.2	The Facilities and Equipment	145	75.5
8	5.0	4	12.5	The Competition	12	6.3
11	6.9	1	3.1	The Fact the Person Didn't Get to Play Often	12	6.3
6	3.8	4	12.5	The Coach	10	5.2
2	1.2	3	9.4	Other Members of the Team	5	2.6
4	2.5	0	0	Lack of Institutional Recognition and Support of Program	4	2.1
0	0	2	6.3	Too Few Students Go Out for Sport	2	1.0

Males N	Males Pct	Females N	Females Pct		Total Group N	Total Group Pct
1	.6	0	0	Schedule of Competitive Events Too Erratic	1	.5
1	.6	0	0	Lack of a Winning Tradition	1	.5
160	100.	32	100.		192	100.

Value Received From Athletic Participation at Harper

21	12.7	3	8.8	Athletic Experience at Harper Allowed Students to Participate in the Same Sport at University They Now Attend or Will Be Attending	24	12.0
51	30.9	7½	22.1	Athletic Experience at Harper Produced Lasting Benefits	58½	29.4
23	13.9	11	32.3	Athletic Experience at Harper was Great But Produced No Lasting Benefits	34	17.1
63	38.2	10	29.4	Athletic Experience at Harper was a Neutral One	73	36.7
7	4.3	2½	7.4	Athletic Experience at Harper Was a Bad One	9½	4.8
165	100.	34	100.		199	100.

College or University at Which Former Harper Athlete Is Now or Will Be Participating in a Varsity Program

Institution	Male	Female	Total	Institution	Male	Female	Total
Northern Illinois	2	1	3	St.Joseph's College-Indiana	1	0	1
Illinois State	2	0	2	Valparaiso University	1	0	1
Eastern Illinois	1	1	2	Stetson University -Florida	1	0	1
Michigan Tech	2	0	2	Bradley	1	0	1
University of Illinois	1	0	1	Univ. of Nevada-Las Vegas	1	0	1
Southern Illinois	1	0	1	Western Illinois	1	0	1
Arizona State	1	0	1	Central Arkansas	1	0	1
University of Utah	1	0	1	In Process of Deciding	3	1	4
				Total	21	3	24

Males N	Males Pct	Females N	Females Pct	Other Lasting Benefits Produced by Varsity Athletic Program at Harper for Its Participants	Total Group N	Total Group Pct
12½	24.5	1½	20.0	Developed New Friendships	14	23.9
5½	10.8	1	13.4	In General It Was a Good Experience	6½	11.1
4½	8.8	1	13.3	Improved Abilities and Knowledge in That Sport	5½	9.4
3½	6.8	1	13.3	Developed Confidence to Compete with Others	4½	7.7
2	3.9	1	13.3	Keeps Person Playing Sport in Recreational Programs	3	5.1
3	5.9	0	0	Produced Good Memories	3	5.1
2½	4.9	0	0	Learned Teamwork	2½	4.3
2½	4.9	0	0	Developed Physically, Built Strength, Kept in Shape	2½	4.3
2	3.9	½	6.7	Improved Human Relations Skills	2½	4.3
1	2.0	1	13.3	Helped Student Find a Job	2	3.4
2	3.9	0	0	Provided Student with Opportunity in Pro or SemiPro Sports	2	3.4
2	3.9	0	0	Specific Benefits Not Specified	2	3.4
1½	2.9	0	0	Learned Good Sportsmanship and New Values	1½	2.6
1½	2.9	0	0	Provided Good Preparation to Transfer	1½	2.6
1	2.0	0	0	Introduced Student to Participation in Other Sports	1	1.7
1	2.0	0	0	Learned to Enjoy Life	1	1.7
1	2.0	0	0	Learned Discipline	1	1.7
1	2.0	0	0	Developed School Spirit	1	1.7
0	0	½	6.7	Helped Student Stay in School	½	.9
½	1.0	0	0	Helped Student Mature	½	.9
½	1.0	0	0	Developed the Mind	½	.8
51	100.	7½	100.		58½	100.

Bad Experiences of Former Harper Athletes

	Male	Female	Total
Injury Prevented Participation	2	0	2
Coaching was Poor	1½	0	1½
Program Cancelled Due to Lack of Interest	0	1½	1½
Program Cancelled Due to Lack of Institutional Support	1	0	1
Coaches Let Favorites Rather Than Best Athletes Play	1	0	1
Was Like a High School Program	0	1	1
Bad Experience with Coach and Was Forced to Quit	1	0	1
No Closeness Between Team Members	½	0	½
	7	2½	9½

APPENDIX

William Rainey Harper College
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, Illinois 60067
312-397-3000

May 30, 1979

Dear Student:

We need your help. As Harper College grows, we are constantly assessing reasons why people do or do not attend William Rainey Harper College. You were one of over 400 students who participated in intercollegiate athletics at Harper College during the 1978-79 school year. Each year we evaluate the budget needed to support intercollegiate athletics, and this year we would like to have additional information provided by the students who participated in the activities.

Attached is a questionnaire which will help us plan the future of intercollegiate athletics at Harper College. It is important for us that you complete the attached form and return it within two weeks to Dr. Jack Lucas, Director of Research, William Rainey Harper College. The information you provide will benefit the current program and will add strength to the program for future students.

Thank you for your participation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Guerin A. Fischer

Guerin A. Fischer
Vice President of Student Affairs

GAF:vm
Attachment

Follow-Up of Former Athletes at Harper

1. What was the principle reason you enrolled at Harper? Check (✓) one.

   _____ A. I enrolled at Harper because of the academic programs offered or because of convenience or low cost. I decided to participate in athletics after enrolling at Harper.

   _____ B. I enrolled at Harper in order to participate in a varsity athletic program.

2. Check (✓) the greatest strength (only one) you found in the athletic program in which you participated.

   _____ A. The coach.
   _____ B. The closeness with other members of the team.
   _____ C. The facilities and equipment.
   _____ D. The competition.
   _____ E. The fact I got to compete a lot.
   _____ F. The fact I really enjoy this particular sport.
   _____ G. Other (specify) _____

3. Check (✓) the greatest weakness (only one) you found in the athletic program in which you participated.

   _____ A. The coach.
   _____ B. The other members of the team.
   _____ C. The facilities and equipment.
   _____ D. The competition.
   _____ E. The fact I didn't get to compete much.
   _____ F. Other (specify) _____

4. How would you judge the value you received from the athletic program in which you participated. Check (✓) one.

   _____ A. Because of my experience at Harper, I was able to participate in the same varsity atheltic program at the senior institution I am now attending. Which institution?
   _____

   _____ B. The varsity program in which I participated at Harper has produced other lasting benefit to me in my present situation. Describe. _____

   _____ C. My experience in varsity athletics at Harper was great but it has produced no lasting benefits for me.

   _____ D. My experience in varsity athletics at Harper was a neutral one.

   _____ E. My experience in vasity atheltics at Harper was a bad one. Describe. _____
   _____
   _____

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